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ABSTRACT

In its fourth year, the computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program provided instructional and support activities to 276 Russian-speaking students, most of whom are limited English proficient, at 4 public and 2 private high schools in Brooklyn. Instructional activities varied by site. Public school students took English as a Second Language (ESL), native language arts (NLA) courses in Russian culture and literature, and content area (mathematics, science, and social studies) and business and vocational subjects taught bilingually or in English using ESL methodology. At private schools, the project offered individual and small-group tutorials in English and content areas. Additional program components included counseling, tutoring, vocational services, staff development, and parental involvement activities. The program met its objectives in ESL, NLA, content area subjects, and parental involvement, but did not provide sufficient data to assess the computer skills and student attitudes objectives. The project was found to be successful in providing English and native language instruction to recent Russian immigrants and in directly involving their parents or grandparents in activities. (MSE)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

COMPUTER-FOCUSED RUSSIAN BILINGUAL
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
Grant Number: T003A9011

1988-89

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EVALUATION SECTION
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April 1990

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

COMPUTER-FOCUSED RUSSIAN BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Grant Number: T003A9011

1988-89

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COMPUTER-FOCUSED RUSSIAN BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM
1988-89

SUMMARY

- The Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program was fully implemented. During the 1988-89 school year, students received instruction in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, bilingual and E.S.L.-based content areas, and computer skills. The project also provided personal counseling, tutoring, and parental and staff development activities.

- The project achieved its objectives in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, content area courses, and parental involvement. The program did not provide data to assess specific computer skills as proposed.

The Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program was an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII-funded program providing instructional and support activities to 276 Russian-speaking students, most of whom were of limited English proficiency (LEP). The program was in the last year of a four-year funding cycle at four public and two private high schools in Brooklyn.

The program's instructional activities varied across sites. Students at the public schools took English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.) courses in Russian culture and literature, and content area and business and vocational subjects taught bilingually or in English using E.S.L. methodology. At the private schools, the project offered individual and small group tutorials in English and the content areas. Additional program components included counseling, tutoring, vocational services, staff development, and parental involvement activities.

The program met its objectives in E.S.L., N.L.A., content area subjects, and parental involvement (although it did not provide E.S.L. and citizenship classes for parents but relied instead on referrals to classes available in the community). The program failed to provide specific data to assess the objective in computer skills. OREA was also unable to assess the objective for student attitudes due to the lack of appropriate data.

The project was successful in providing English and native language instruction to recent Russian immigrants and either directly involving their parents (or grandparents) in activities or providing them with access to classes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program. In 1988-89, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) funded this program for its fourth year. The program served 276 Russian-speaking students, most of whom were of limited English proficiency (LEP students). The program sought to increase students' proficiency in English and Russian language skills, to promote academic growth, to improve attitudes toward education, and to provide computer and career instruction. The Bilingual/E.S.L. Unit of the New York City Board of Education's Division of High Schools (D.H.S.) was responsible for overseeing the program.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

See OREA's previous final evaluation reports for an overview of the project's history, its activities, and the resultant findings of those initial years.

SETTING

Four public high schools (Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, James Madison, and South Shore High Schools) and two Yeshivot (Be'er Hagola and Harama) participated in the program. The project headquarters was at South Shore High School.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

To be included in the program, students had to have immigrated within the previous three years. The majority of students were LEP, although some non-LEP students were selected for program participation because of their poor academic performance. The project provided age and grade data for 266 students. (See Table 1.) The number of students decreased as the grade increased, with 93 in the ninth grade and only 36 in the twelfth grade. Fifteen percent of participating students were over-age for their grade placement.

Students' proficiency in both Russian and English varied. Those leaving the Soviet Union at an older age had a strong foundation in Russian but lacked proficiency in English. Students who had left the Soviet Union at an early age, or who had been out of school for a long time while awaiting emigration possessed limited or no skills in reading and writing Russian. Some Jewish students had learned Hebrew in preparation for actual or anticipated moves to Israel, further complicating their language development. However, the number of these students has been decreasing, and continuing a trend started in the previous year more emigrants have arrived directly from the Soviet Union.

In some families, adjustment difficulties affected students' performance. Parents were sometimes overburdened by responsibilities and did not involve themselves in the education of their children. However, if grandparents were available, they

TABLE 1

Number of Program Students by Age and Grade[a]

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
13	10				10
14	32	2		1	35
15	39	32	6	1	78
16	8	27	28	2	65
17	6	10	23	17	56
18	1	3	8	13	25
19			1	3	4
TOTAL	96	74	66	37	273[b]

Note. Outlined boxes indicate expected age range for grade.

[a]As of June 1989.

[b]Data were missing for three students.

- More participating students were in the ninth grade than in any other.
- Fifteen percent of program students were over-age for their grade.

frequently assumed responsibility for children's needs, as occurs in the Soviet Union.

STAFF

Title VII staff included a project director, two resource teachers, an educational assistant, and a secretary. All except the secretary were fluent in both Russian and English. The resource teachers divided their time between the four public schools, and the educational assistant provided services at the two private schools. The resource teachers provided small group instruction in all subject areas, including Native Language Arts (N.L.A.). The project director and the assistant principal of the foreign language department at each school supervised the resource teachers. The principal at each yeshiva supervised the educational assistant.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The program provided all students with instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) and some students with N.L.A. (Russian language and literature) as well. Students also enrolled in bilingual courses in social studies, career education, and hygiene. Instruction in science, economics, and computer science used an E.S.L. approach. The program focused on small-group and individualized tutorial assistance geared to particular needs. The program also provided guidance and counseling, extracurricular activities, curriculum and staff development, and parental involvement activities.

REPORT FORMAT

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II explains the evaluation methodology; Chapter III describes the project's activities and evaluates the objectives pertaining to its implementation; Chapter IV looks at the student performance objectives; and Chapter V offers conclusions based upon the results of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed two major program components: implementation and outcomes. Evaluation questions included the following:

Process/Implementation

- Did the program select students according to specific criteria?
- Did the project implement the instructional activities for developing English language proficiency as proposed?
- Did the project implement the instructional activities for developing native language skills as proposed?
- Did the program provide computer and career instruction as planned?
- Did the program offer E.S.L. classes for parents?
- How many parent workshops did project staff hold?

Outcome

- What was the average Normal Curve Equivalent gain on the Language Assessment Battery?
- What percentage of program students passed their N.L.A. courses?
- What percentage of program students passed their courses in mathematics, science, and social studies?
- Did program students achieve projected goals in the development of computer skills?
- Did program participants develop a more positive attitude about school?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

OREA staff collected qualitative data through a project director questionnaire, interviews with the director and assistant principals of foreign language departments at two high schools, and observations of two classes at these same schools. OREA provided student data forms for all participating students; the project returned 276 completed forms.

Instruments

OREA developed interview and observation schedules. The project director completed an OREA-developed questionnaire. Project personnel entered demographic, attendance, and achievement data on OREA-developed student data forms.

Data Collection

The OREA field consultant conducted interviews and class observations during April, 1989. OREA sent the project director questionnaire and student data forms in the months of December and May; the project returned them in February and June.

Data Analysis

OREA used the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) to assess improvement in English proficiency. Project students were tested at grade level each spring. Students' raw scores were converted to Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) scores, which have multiple advantages over other scoring methods. They are standard, normalized, and form an equal interval scale. ("Standard"

indicates that the unit of measurement is a fraction of the standard deviation of the original distribution of raw scores; "normalized" refers to the fact that the scale is adjusted for the norm group so that its distribution has the shape of a normal distribution; and "equal interval scales" allow for legitimate aggregation or averaging of scores.) Project students' N.C.E.s indicated their standing in relation to the national average of 50.

To assess the significance of students' achievement in English, OREA computed a correlated t-test on LAB N.C.E. scores. The t-test determined whether the difference between the pre- and posttest scores was significantly greater than would be expected by chance variation alone.

To insure representative achievement data, OREA included only those students who had been in the program for at least five months and had attended classes for at least 100 school days. OREA extrapolated to estimate full-year scores of late-arriving and early-exiting students.

Limitations

Since all LEP students are entitled to receive bilingual and E.S.L. services, OREA was unable to select an equivalent control group. However, the use of two sets of data, as outlined above, served in lieu of a control group.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS: IMPLEMENTATION

STUDENT PLACEMENT AND PROGRAMMING

The program selected students who had arrived in the United States within the three previous years and who were either poor academic performers or who had scored below the twenty-first percentile on the Language Assessment Battery.*

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The project implemented instructional activities in E.S.L., N.L.A., content area subjects, and computer skills.

English as a Second Language

The public schools offered beginning, intermediate, advanced, and transitional levels of E.S.L. At the private schools, the educational assistant tutored students in reading and writing in English.

An OREA field consultant observed beginning and intermediate E.S.L. classes at South Shore High School. The beginning class was involved in a discussion of the importance of attendance in achieving success in school and work. The intermediate class was learning how to express past events, drawing on student

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of non-native speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

compositions. The students displayed a good deal of interest and involvement. The classes were informal but structured; the teachers relied primarily on the lecture format but also offered opportunities for questions and answers and expression of opinions.

Native Language Arts

The program offered Russian N.L.A. at two levels. The field consultant observed a class conducted entirely in Russian at Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School. Each student read a part of a Russian story aloud. The class was conducted in a formal, structured manner, with the teacher explaining meaning after each recitation. Students listened quietly and participated eagerly.

Content Area Subjects

The OREA field consultant observed a social studies class at Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School. The focus of the lesson was on the early history of the United States. The class was conducted in English, but students asked questions in Russian when they failed to understand. The teacher answered first in Russian and then in English. Students spoke with each other mainly in Russian. The teacher asked questions that prompted student response and discussion.

Computer Skills

Each school offered a range of English language business education and computer literacy courses. Whenever possible, schools made computers available during the students' free

periods. For the computer literacy courses, the program utilized existing curricula, software, and instructional materials developed in previous Russian bilingual programs. In addition, students used a Russian/English dictionary of computer terms that the project had developed in 1986-87 and updated during the currrent year.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Although the project offered a wide range of non-instructional activities, it only proposed objectives for parental involvement.

Support Services

In order to provide needed support to students experiencing stressful adjustments and/or school problems, the program offered guidance and counseling at each site and made referrals to a psychologist when necessary. Project staff advised participants about college and vocational options, seeking to help them develop realistic goals.

As it had in the previous year, the program conducted a field trip to Kingsborough Community College to familiarize students with some available educational options. The program also provided vocational services, including a guest speaker who told students how to apply for a job and held discussions emphasizing the importance of schooling and consistent attendance.

The project provided tutorial assistance on a one-to-one and/or small group basis. Program staff tutored in English, N.L.A., and content area subjects. The project also provided tutoring and other follow-up services to students who had been mainstreamed but who continued to need assistance.

Students participated in extracurricular activities, including a trip to the United Nations and a meeting with a Russian writer.

Staff Development

Project personnel attended staff meetings on curriculum adaptation, testing procedures, and career options. They also participated in outside meetings focusing on techniques for identifying and teaching LEP students. One resource teacher attended a leadership conference in Albany. Participating teachers enrolled in relevant courses at area universities.

Curriculum Development

The program developed original curriculum materials in career education. It also adapted materials in biology, hygiene, economics, and mathematics. In addition, the program updated the Russian/English dictionary of computer terms developed by program staff at an earlier date.

Parental Involvement

The program objectives for parental involvement stated that by the end of the year:

- A series of E.S.L. classes for parents of LEP students in the project will have been given at four of the target sites.

- A minimum of seven workshops will have been conducted by project staff to inform parents about the project, and specifically the computer instruction component of the project.

The program continued its policy of holding parents' advisory council meetings with parents from the six schools. In lieu of program E.S.L. classes for parents, the program referred interested parents to E.S.L. and citizenship classes offered at Temple Emanu-El on Rockaway Parkway in Brooklyn. Thus, although parents were able to obtain E.S.L. instruction, the program did not provide it at four sites as specified and thus did not meet the first parental involvement objective.

The program also encouraged families to call or visit to discuss students' academic or social problems, to use the program's lending library, and to attend the open-school days held at each site. The project held workshops for parents (and grandparents) at one of the program sites or at the program office. An average of more than ten parents attended each session, and a project staff member translated when necessary. The workshops focused on the students' progress and problems; one workshop was geared to a discussion of leadership. Some parents participated in a leadership conference in Albany and the trip to Kingsborough Community College. The project met the second parental involvement objective.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS: OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The project proposed instructional objectives in E.S.L., N.L.A., content area subjects, and computer skills.

English as a Second Language

The evaluation objective for the development of English language skills was:

- As a result of participating in the program, students will make statistically significant gains in English language proficiency.

The project provided complete LAB data for only 62 students. Of these, 55 were in the program for at least five months and were pretested prior to February 1989. These 55 students demonstrated an increase of almost 20 N.C.E.s, which was statistically significant ($p < .05$). (See Table 2.) However, due to the relatively small proportion of students for whom data were available, OREA was unable to definitely assess the attainment of the objective.

The project provided additional information for 21 project students who had both pre- and posttest results on the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) test. This small group of students also recorded statistically significant gains ($p <. 05$).

The project also provided data on the results of teacher-made tests in E.S.L. for 196 students in the fall and for 167 students in the spring. In the fall, 82 percent of the students achieved a passing grade of 65 or more, while in the spring 92

TABLE 2

Pretest/Posttest N.C.E. Differences on the Language Assessment Battery, by Grade and School[a]

Grade	Number of students	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	Difference Mean	Difference S.D.	t Value
9	12	14.8	13.7	41.4	19.8	26.6	14.5	6.37*
10	29	14.3	13.2	31.6	15.1	17.3	15.5	6.01*
11	9	15.6	13.9	32.1	19.9	16.6	13.6	3.66*
12	5	6.3	7.3	30.8	6.8	24.5	8.5	6.44*
				Site Results[b]				
Lincoln	20	14.3	14.8	27.5	15.4	13.2	15.9	3.72*
Madison	9	16.9	9.9	38.4	17.2	21.6	12.8	5.05*
F.D.R.	20	12.7	13.0	39.3	14.8	26.6	12.0	9.93*
South Shore	6	12.3	12.2	29.3	20.7	17.0	14.4	2.89*
TOTAL	55	13.9	12.9	33.8	16.6	19.9	14.8	9.99*

*$p < .05$

[a]Includes students who were in the program for at least five months.

[b]Data were not available for the yeshivot.

- Students in all grades made statistically significant gains on the LAB.
- Students in all four public schools made significant gains on the LAB.

percent achieved a passing grade. Taken together these data indicated that the project appeared to have met its E.S.L. objective.

Native Language Arts

The evaluation objective for the development of skill in the native language was:

- A minimum of 80 percent of the students participating in the project will achieve a grade of 75 or higher in the Native Language Arts component of the program.

The program provided data for 154 students in the fall and 136 in the spring. Data for 121 students in the program for at least five months are presented in Table 3. In the fall, 89 percent of the students exceeded the target grade of 75 or higher. Only 75 percent of the students achieved the targeted grade in the spring semester. This averages to 82 percent for the year, therefore the project met its N.L.A. objective.

Content Area Subjects

The evaluation objective for content area subjects was:

- Seventy percent of the program students will achieve a passing grade of 65 or better on teacher-made tests.

Overall, 90 percent of the students achieved the passing criterion of 65 in content area subjects. (See Table 4.) With the exception of science and social studies at South Shore High School during the fall semester (for which the target numbers fell short by only 0.8 percent), students achieved the passing rate at each school in all subjects. The program met its objective for content area subjects.

TABLE 3

Student Achievement in Native Language Arts[a]

School	Fall		Spring		TOTAL	
	Number of Students	Percent Passing[b]	Number of Students	Percent Passing[b]	Number Student	Percent Passing[b]
Be'er Hagola[c]	--	--	--	--	--	--
Harama	52	86.5	47	63.8	99	75.8
Lincoln	1	100.0	21	81.0	22	81.8
Madison	22	90.9	14	85.7	36	88.9
F.D.R.	39	92.3	28	82.1	67	88.1
South Shore	7	85.7	4	100.0	11	90.9
TOTAL	121	89.3	114	75.4	235	82.6

[a]Includes only students who were in attendance for at least 100 days.

[b]Passing grade of 75 percent.

[c]The project did not provide data for Yeshiva Be'er Hagola.

- At all reporting sites except one, over 80 percent of participating students received grades of at least 75.

TABLE 4

Student Achievement in Content Area Courses*

School	Area	Fall		Spring	
		Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing
Be'er Hagola	Mathematics	16	93.8	9	100.0
	Science	16	81.3	9	100.0
	Social Studies	16	87.5	9	88.9
Harama	Mathematics	51	96.1	47	100.0
	Science	50	94.0	47	100.0
	Social Studies	50	96.0	47	100.0
Lincoln	Mathematics	29	79.3	28	71.4
	Science	29	89.7	21	76.2
	Social Studies	15	100.0	30	86.7
Madison	Mathematics	23	87.0	25	72.0
	Science	22	100.0	24	83.3
	Social Studies	22	90.9	28	89.3
F.D.R.	Mathematics	46	97.8	51	88.2
	Science	48	83.3	44	81.8
	Social Studies	52	98.1	47	93.6
South Shore	Mathematics	14	92.9	10	90.0
	Science	13	69.2	8	87.5
	Social Studies	13	69.2	13	92.3
Total	Mathematics	179	92.2	170	87.1
	Science	178	88.2	153	88.2
	Social Studies	168	93.5	174	93.1

*Includes only students who were in attendance for at least 100 days.

- Overall, 90 percent of the students passed content area courses each semester.

Computer Skills

The evaluation objective for computer skills was:

- A minimum of 75 percent of the students participating in the program will be able to perform the following tasks relating to computer literacy/keyboarding: elementary programming skills in BASIC language; touch keyboarding using the alphabetic, numeric, and symbol keyboard; typing at least 25 w.p.m. with a high degree of accuracy on a personal computer keyboard.

The program did not provide any data to directly assess the achievement of the computer skills objective.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The project proposed a non-instructional outcome objective in student attitudes.

Student Attitudes

- A minimum of 80 percent of the students participating in the program will have developed a more positive attitude about school and its importance in their future lives.

Although the project provided many services and activities designed to help participating students develop a positive attitude towards school, the lack of quantitative data regarding attitude change made it impossible for OREA to determine whether the Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program had met its proposed objective.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In its fourth and final year of funding, the Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program continued to provide a variety of services to improve student proficiency in English, Russian, career and content area subjects, and attitudes toward school. An OREA consultant observed E.S.L., N.L.A., and content area classes. In each instance, students appeared to be involved and interested in the instruction.

The small group of students for whom complete pre- and posttest data were available recorded statistically significant gains on the LAB and the D.R.P. Students on whom the project provided data achieved a slightly higher passing rate than last year. The project appears to have met its E.S.L. objective. It is possible that the nature of the program population (i.e., recent immigrants) made it impossible to obtain complete data. The students may not have been in the school long enough to have taken a pretest. The project met its N.L.A. objective, although students' passing rate in N.L.A. courses declined in the spring semester. This poorer performance in the spring may have again been due to the nature of the population: there may have many new arrivals in this semester. As they did last year, project students achieved a high overall passing rate in content area subjects during both semesters; the program achieved its objective in this area. The project did not provide data to determine whether students mastered the specific skills enumerated in the computer skills objective.

While support services continued to be a major program component, the project failed to provide data to assess its objective of students' developing more positive attitudes toward school.

The Computer-Focused Russian Bilingual Instructional Program fulfilled the intent of its parental involvement objectives, if not the specific objectives themselves. It provided workshops as specified but utilized referral to E.S.L. and citizenship classes rather than by providing them directly at the four public school sites. As in prior years, the program continued its staff and curriculum development activities.

The project was successful in providing English and native language instruction to recent Russian immigrants. It also either directly involved their parents (or grandparents) in activities or provided them with access to E.S.L. and citizenship classes.